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**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310**

IN REPLY REFER TO

AGAM-P (M) (18 Jul 68) FOR OT RD 682206

31 July 1968

**SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 43d
Signal Battalion (Spt), Period Ending 30 April 1968 (U)**

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1. Subject report is forwarded for review and evaluation in accordance with paragraph 5b, AR 525-15. Evaluations and corrective actions should be reported to ACSFOR OT RD, Operational Reports Branch, within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure appropriate benefits in the future from lessons learned during current operations and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

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KENNETH G. WICKHAM
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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 43D SIGNAL BATTALION (SUPPORT)
APO US Forces 96318

SOOVNG-PHO

12 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 43d Signal Battalion (SPT) for Period
Ending 30 April 1968, RGS CSFOR-65 (R1)

Reference: 21st Signal Group Reg 1-19, dated 17 April 1968, Subject:
Operational Report - Lessons Learned (RGS CSFOR-65) (R1)

1. Section 1. Operations: Significant Activities.

a. General:

(1) The battalion was operational in the Republic of Vietnam for the entire reporting period of 90 days. A major change in mission, organization and deployment was the addition of the 586th Signal Company (Support), based at An Khe, to include communications-electronics support for Binh Dinh province east to north-south grid line BR5, approximately 108° 41' east longitude. Major effort was expended in the following areas: improving the quality of installed communications; raising the level of personnel proficiency through OJT and self instructional programs; raising the standards of all categories of equipment maintenance to include vehicles, power generators, and signal equipment; and improving the living and recreational facilities for assigned personnel.

(2) The 43d Signal Battalion (SPT) was originally conceived and designed to provide communications support to advisors in the II Corps Tactical Zone. All of its elements were formed under TOE 11-500D tailored to the specific mission conceived for the unit. Subsequently, the battalion's mission was changed to that of providing area communications support for US Army organizations within four and one-half provinces. The original TOE does not fit the current mission. As a result, several original companies (B, D, and E) have been detached and others attached (278th and 586th Signal Companies). Additionally, the internal organization of the remaining units has been rearranged to best match resources

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to requirements. An extensive modification to the existing TOE has been submitted to 21st Signal Group and forwarded thru 1st Signal Brigade. This change is intended to suit the organization to its long-term mission as now known.

b. Activities:

(1) The attachment and assignment of the 586th Signal Company on 15 February 1968 found this battalion with the responsibility for communications support in the western portion of Binh Dinh province. The major function of the 586th Signal Company is to provide area communications in support of An Khe and base camp facilities for Camp Radoliff, former home of the 1st Air Cavalry Division.

(2) In February this battalion sponsored the arrival in-country of the 596th Signal Company which was originally scheduled to locate in An Khe. The 43d Signal Battalion processed the new unit and moved it in March 1968 to Phu Bai where it is now part of the 63d Signal Battalion.

(3) The communications center previously established at Dak To during Operation MacArthur in support of both the tactical units of the 4th Infantry Division and the FSA was deactivated on 11 April 1968. Complete deactivation and return to Pleiku was accomplished within 48 hours.

(4) On 8-9 April 1968, this unit was visited by the 1st Signal Brigade Commander, Brigadier General Van Harlingen. The operational improvements since the previous quarter were discussed.

c. Personnel and Administration:

(1) During this reporting period there were 345 assigned gains and 351 losses for a net decrease of 6 personnel. On 15 February the entire 586th Signal Company was assigned to this headquarters from the 41st Signal Battalion; this increased the authorized strength of the organization from 831 personnel for the last reporting period to the present authorization of 1135 officers and enlisted men. The assigned strength of this organization as of 30 April 1968 was 983 officers and enlisted personnel or 86.6 percent of authorized strength.

(2) The following are personnel shortages which critically affect the accomplishment of this organization's mission:

<u>Number Short</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
3	32D40	Facilities Controller
7	36H40	DCO Repairman

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17	52A10	Powerman
13	63A10	Mech Maint Apprenice
5	71B30	Clerk Typist
73	72C20	Switchboard Operators

(3) During this reporting period an ATOE was received for the 278th Signal Company which more nearly parallels the mission presently assigned to that unit. This ATOE has greatly increased the efficiency of the 278th Signal Company and has provided needed changes in personnel that would have taken much longer had it been necessary to wait on the MTOE to be approved.

(4) There were six Bronze Star Medals, four Army Commendation Medals and 21 Purple Heart Medals awarded to personnel of this battalion during the reporting period. Seventy-eight (78) recommendations for awards have been forwarded to higher headquarters and remain pending approval.

(5) Assignment of senior enlisted personnel in overstrength grades and MOS's has created an undesirable promotion situation within the organization. Additionally, attachments and long-term TDY of personnel away from the battalion to 21st Signal Group, SEA Signal School and to other battalions and groups are a definite drain on available resources..

d. Security:

(1) Two 10KW generators have been installed as back-up power for the perimeter lights at Paeiku. Also, a 3KW generator has been installed as back-up power for the spot light.

(2) Company C at Kontum installed additional wire and claymore mines to increase the depth and fire power coverage of the perimeter. Power distribution lines for the perimeter lights were buried to prevent damage by mortar and small arms fire. Also, communications lines between observation towers and bunkers have been buried.

(3) The 586th Signal Company at An Khe has constructed a new ammunition bunker; and revetments around all barracks housing personnel have been built. The DCO has been completely reveted and sandbagging of the communications center generators is approximately 50 percent completed. The signal center at Hon Cong Mountain has installed perimeter bunkers.

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(4) During the quarterly period ending 30 April 1968, there were numerous rocket, mortar and small arms attacks.

(a) Locations affected:

1. Bn HQ's and Co A, MACV Compound, PKU RVN
2. Detachment 1, Co A, Pleiku North PKU RVN
3. Detachment 2, Co A, Camp Holloway, PKU RVN
4. Detachment 3, Co A, DTO, RVN
5. Co C, 43d Sig Bn, KTM RVN
6. Detachment 1, Co C, BMT, RVN
7. 278th Sig Co, 43d Sig Bn, PUS RVN
8. 586th Sig Co, 43d Sig Bn, AXE RVN

(b) Personnel WIA and KIA

1. HHD and Co A - None
2. Co C at Kontum - 2 KIA, 26 WIA
3. 278th Sig Co - None
4. 586th Sig Co - None

(c) Equipment

1. Co A Pleiku - None
2. Co C Kontum and Ban Me Thuot - Equipment damage at beginning of quarter was extensive. Approximately 95 percent of the cable and wire lines were damaged. Vehicles and generators suffered approximately 5 percent destroyed and 70 percent superficially damaged.

3. 278th Sig Co Camp Enari - None
4. 586th Sig Co An Kho - None

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e. Safety:

(1) Command emphasis on safe working conditions and habits continues down to the lowest level in all operational areas of this organization.

(2) Safe driving practices are continually emphasized in Command Information and through the various news media available to the Safety Officer. A Battalion Safety Patrol has been initiated to enforce safe driving in the areas most heavily travelled by vehicles of this organization and to cite unsafe acts or practices observed by the patrol. This patrol is conducted on an unannounced schedule at least four days a week in three cities near which units of this organization are assigned.

f. Training:

(1) The Battalion Training Section has continued to pursue and maintain high standards in all facets of training. The battalion training SOP has been revised. This SOP was rewritten utilizing suggestions made by subordinate units during their monthly training inspections. The new SOP includes standardized procedures for Southeast Asia Signal School courses and a standardized format for weekly training schedules of subordinate units. Further explanation was given to the proper utilization of USASTRATCOM Form 115, Individual Training Records, so that training of persons assigned to a subordinate unit but attached to another unit could be recorded.

(2) Enthusiasm was shown by all elements of the command for the use of 1st Signal Brigade Signal School, and thus maximum utilization was made of quotas for courses offered. Personnel in the number indicated below completed the following courses:

<u>COURSE</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>
AN/TRC-110/117	3
AN/TRC-24, AN/GRC-50	3
Toll Test	1
Cable Splicer	4
TTY Ckt Restoral	1
Operation Counter PLL Training	5
Test Fac Cont & Ckt Restoral Cns	1
M-16 Armorer Tng	4

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(3) Standardized formal OJT programs in the MOS's 31M, 72B, and 72C have been distributed to all companies and sites. Work has been started for a standardized O5C OJT course. This production of formal OJT programs at battalion level has insured continuity of courses throughout the battalion as well as releasing subordinate units from a duplication of effort. All that remains in this field is the testing of individuals. This testing will occur during inspection tours by members of the battalion staff.

(4) Battalion staff personnel produced a self-instructional text on SOP's, SSI's and SOI's. Initial distribution of the text was made to all officers and senior NCO's. Subordinate units have been advised to suggest topics which might be used in future self-instructional texts. Indications are that this project has been met with great success and enthusiasm and that it has served as a valuable aid in instructing personnel in COMTEL operations.

(5) Using battalion-produced tests on the MOS's 31M, 72B, and 72C, now personnel of all ranks assigned to the battalion are tested during in-processing. These tests were produced using POI's from Southeast Signal School in Fort Gordon, Georgia. In this way, battalion training and operations can determine those weaknesses in newly assigned personnel which must be strengthened by OJT and classroom training.

(6) Battalion training has increased its coverage of training topics through use of the battalion's monthly newspaper. A short definition and explanation of these topics are written in a light vein to create interest among battalion personnel.

g. Operations:

(1) Construction has begun by the 815th Engineer Battalion on the Pleiku South Dial Telephone Exchange. The ground has been prepared and the foundation started.

(2) In conjunction with the installation of the DCO at the 4th Infantry Division Base Camp, all WD-1 drop wire in use must be replaced with acceptable drop wire. 21st Sig Gp SCO 116-67 was published to accomplish this task. To date, the material required has not been received.

(3) The outside cable plant project for Ban Mo Thuot has begun. Fifty (50) percent of the BON is presently on-site. Ten men of the 578th Signal Company are at Ban Mo Thuot and have begun sorting and arranging materials on hand. The actual laying of cable is expected to begin within one or two weeks.

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(4) After cessation of hostilities in the Kontum area, work continued on the Kontum Outside Cable Plant. The project was completed by mid-March and all existing circuits were cut over to the cable system. The cable project improved the area by removing extraneous field wire and simplified trouble shooting procedures. A prime disadvantage of aerial cables has been their vulnerability to small arms, rocket and mortar fire.

(5) A new Pleiku Army Technical Control Facility (AN/MSQ-73 and SB-675) was installed and completely cut over by 11 April 1968. The new control facility has greatly enhanced the capability for controlling, routing and trouble shooting circuits terminated and relayed within the Pleiku Communications complex. In conjunction with the Technical Control Facility, a new underground cable scheme was installed and the Pleiku communications site completely rewired. The new cable scheme reduces the possibility of cable damage during enemy attacks and is accurately mapped for future reference.

(6) Two manual telephone exchanges were deactivated during the reporting period: Pleiku Local Switchboard on 3 March 1968 and Camp Schmidt Switchboard on 15 April 1968. The Camp Holloway Switchboard is scheduled for deactivation by early May. These switchboards were deactivated due to the increased coverage offered by the Air Force Dial Telephone Exchange. The Pleiku Local Board was sent to Ban Mo Thuot to provide improved service at that location. The Camp Schmidt board was evacuated to Qui Nhon for a complete rebuild.

(7) In April, Ban Mo Thuot received the AN/IRC-1 from Pleiku, which was installed at the Bungalow next to the VHF system. The change in location from the City Strip eliminated the need for extended lines of communication between the switchboard and VHF. Due to the fact that the majority of switchboard subscribers are in the Bungalow area, the move resulted in less wire requiring service and a more secure area in which to work.

(8) The Class IV Pleiku Army Communications Center was completed and became operational on 7 March 1968. The fixed station equipment is more suitable to carry the extensive load of this center and has greatly increased the efficiency of the overall service to its subscribers. The new facility has increased the working area and resulted in increased supervision of circuits.

(9) During April, four AN/IRC-24 systems within the Pleiku area were cut over to the Air Force Cable System. Three of these systems had been terminated at Pleiku and Camp Holloway and the fourth system at Pleiku and Pleiku North. This cutover has provided local subscribers with better quality circuits and has decreased the workload for the Pleiku, Camp Holloway and Pleiku North VHF Sections.

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(10) The BB108 system between Ploikau and An Kho was deactivated on 26 March 1968. The equipment at Ploikau and An Kho was sent to Phu Bai in support of operations there. At the same time, the SB-675 at the An Kho Tropo Site was deactivated and freed for future commitments. An AN/TRC-24 system, the BBH88, was installed to provide Army area service between Ploikau and An Kho.

(11) One of the two AB-216 towers located at the Dungelow in Ben Me Thuot has been dismantled. Previously, each antenna for the 77UT15 system to Ploikau had been on a separate tower. Both antennas are now on the same tower, without loss of quality to the system. Eight sections will be employed at Kentun increasing the height of the existing tower at that location. The base and remaining 12 sections of the 120 foot tower are awaiting shipment to Dong Ha.

(12) Five one-way dial trunks were installed from Ploikau DTE to Ploikau South MTE. This allows subscribers within the Ploikau area to dial direct to the Ploikau South Switchboard. The result has been improved service between Ploikau and Ploikau South and less workload on the Ploikau LD Switchboard.

(13) Circuit Motivations of Special Note:

(a) A 100-wpm full duplex teletype circuit (ZHQA) was activated on 17 March 1968 between the Ploikau Army Communications Center and the USARV Communications Center at Long Binh. This circuit has greatly increased the handling capabilities for teletype traffic between the two stations. The quantity of service messages as well as handling times previously experienced have been greatly reduced.

(b) A 60-wpm half-duplex teletype circuit (A1587B) was activated on 28 April 1968 between the Ploikau Army Communications Center and the 4th Infantry Division. This circuit has enabled this organization to handle more effectively the traffic load and to decrease handling times to this major tributary station.

(14) A new Electronics Maintenance Facility has been constructed in Ploikau and is currently 100 percent operational. The new facility provides larger work and storage areas for shop personnel and equipment. The new shop has improved the working environment by providing a clean and comfortable work area, resulting in reduced deadline percentages.

h. Logistics:

(1) During the month of February the 596th Signal Company arrived in the Republic of Vietnam and was subsequently assigned to the 43d Signal Battalion. During the period of assignment the 596th was co-located at

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An Khe, RVN, with one other company of this battalion, the 586th Signal Company. The 596th later was transferred from the 43d Signal Battalion during the first half of March and a majority of the personnel of that company moved to Phu Bai. Through close coordination with the 41st Signal Battalion, the men and approximately two-thirds of the organizational equipment were transported to Phu Bai and Chu Lai. The remaining one-third of the TOE equipment was transferred to the 586th Signal Company at An Khe. This equipment was excess to the 586th for both mission requirements and available maintenance capabilities. The equipment has been under the control of the 21st Signal Group and is being utilized on an "as required" basis throughout the group. As of the end of the reporting period, approximately 50 major items still remain at An Khe. This equipment has placed a burden upon the maintenance capability of the 586th Signal Company which must perform periodic services upon the equipment. Through close coordination with maintenance support units, this equipment has been kept in a deployable condition awaiting disposition instructions. Periodic reports of remaining excesses have been made and it is expected that all major items will be transferred by the end of July 1968.

(2) During the month of April the battalion ammunition bunker was completed and provisions established for a third basic load of ammunition for isolated sites. During the Tet offensive at the beginning of February 1968, the signal site at Kontum had almost depleted the existing stock of ammunition at that site. Since there were no facilities at Kontum for resupply at that time, resupply had to be accomplished from Pleiku using battalion or group transportation resources. Obtaining additional ammunition at Pleiku presented a serious problem because the relative locations of the battalion and the Class V supply facility necessitated travel through Pleiku City which was under attack for several days. Since this situation was completely unsatisfactory it was decided to establish a large enough storage facility to store a replacement basic load for Kontum at the battalion location.

(3) All unit maintenance and supply activities had been consolidated under and supervised by the battalion staff. This situation proved unsatisfactory and a return to the original concept has been initiated. Each company now has its own vehicle, electronic and engineer maintenance capability, including PHL. By the end of May, each company will have its own separate supply storage facility. Under this concept of operation the logistics personnel of the battalion will have a greater opportunity to monitor and advise the maintenance and supply activities. Great improvements in the efficiency of operations are expected and the tactical possibilities will be enhanced. Under the decentralized concept, each unit of the battalion is self-supporting under any tactical condition and can operate efficiently within its own resources without direct dependence upon the battalion resources.

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1. Aviation: This battalion is authorized an aviation section by TOE; however, neither aircraft nor aviation personnel are assigned. Support is obtained from the 41st Signal Battalion at Qui Nhon and the 21st Signal Group at Nha Trang. The air support provided by these two organizations generally meets the essential requirements of this battalion, with some periodic delays. Scheduled Air Force and Army flights are utilized to the maximum extent possible to satisfy the needs for air transportation. Only through continued direct aviation support is this battalion able to cover adequately its large area of responsibility.

2. Section 2, Lessons Learned: Commander's Observations, Evaluations and Recommendations:

a. Personnel: None

b. Operations:

(1) Periodic Re-evaluation of Sole User Communications Service.

(a) OBSERVATION: In cases when a unit first establishes itself in a cantonment area, sole-user service is readily provided to subscribers who meet required user criteria. Later arrival of additional units into the same area depletes existing assets precluding complete establishment of future requested communications.

(b) EVALUATION: After establishment of a unit's operations in a given area, actual communications requirements are often less than originally envisioned, requested and installed. Circuits no longer required for operational necessity should be activated in order to release assets for higher priority requirements.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That a quarterly re-evaluation of communications requirements be established in order to determine validity of original installation. Circuit restoration priorities should be included in the re-evaluation based on user experience. Subordinate units should make reports to parent units for necessary coordination to deactivate and free assets for other commitments.

(2) Carrier Levels for AN/TCC-7 Carrier Equipment:

(a) OBSERVATION: When interfacing AN/TCC-7 carrier equipment used with VHF/UHF systems and that of microwave and tropospheric scatter systems, the channel output levels required for the carrier are not as called for in applicable technical manuals.

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(b) EVALUATION: Previously operators have been setting the channel output levels at 0 db as prescribed by TMs in carrier line-up procedures.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That channel output level cards be posted on each stack of carrier equipment. This will provide a ready reference for db levels on individual channels insuring proper levels when interfacing.

(3) Installation of Communications Center "Black" Circuit Patch Bay.

(a) OBSERVATION: The new Pleiku Army Communications Center was designed under the red/black concept. The black patch bay provides circuit appearances on the equipment side of the line isolation relays only. During circuit outages the operators had no patch appearances on the line side of the circuit line isolation relays. It was impossible, therefore, to determine:

1. Whether the relay was keying.

2. Whether the DC keying was actually being transmitted to the main distribution frame.

(b) EVALUATION: Incorporation of circuit appearances on the line side of the relays would provide the operators with the capability of checking the circuits as the keying actually leaves the communications center. Additionally, personnel could provide in-house loop backs from the line side of the relays. In order to resolve this problem, an additional patch bay board on the line side of the line isolation relays was installed.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That this concept be incorporated in the original design of future communications center facilities.

(4) Polarization of Antenna Horn AT-903/G.

(a) OBSERVATION: When the AT-903/G antenna used with the AN/TRC-102 Radio Terminal Set is installed in a vertical position, the polarization is horizontal. When installed horizontally, the polarization is vertical.

(b) EVALUATION: This practice has proved confusing to operators and on occasion resulted in extensive system alignment time until the error was discovered by supervisors.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That a small white dotted line be painted across the face of the horn marking the position of the dipole. The painted line would avoid future confusion in system alignment.

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(5) 1600 Hz Signaling Adjustment in the Operation of the Technical Control Facility AN/MSQ-73.

(a) OBSERVATION: During installation of the AN/MSQ-73 Technical Control Facility, problems were encountered with the 1600 Hz SF signaling units when used with AN/TCG-7 multiplexing equipment. In order to meet the DCA H-500 configuration within the AN/MSQ-73, VF ringdown circuits are wired two-wire to four wire, with the 1600 Hz ringing being supplied within the AN/MSQ-73. The local multiplexing equipment, AN/TCG-7 channel modem and TA-182 ringer, is placed in the four-wire position. The distant and multiplexing equipment is placed in the two-wire position.

(b) EVALUATION: When the local subscriber rings the circuit, the 20 Hz 90VAC ring is converted to 1600 Hz within the AN/MSQ-73. The 1600 Hz ring is sent out on the four-wire send pair through the local multiplexing four-wire to two-wire through a hybrid coil within the channel modem. The 1600 Hz ring is converted back to 20 Hz 90VAC at the distant end TA-182 ringer. There is no adjustment for isolation between four-wire send and four-wire receive pair on the hybrid coil within the AN/TCG-7 channel modem; consequently, when the 1600 Hz ring is sent on the four-wire send pair, feed back was experienced on the four-wire receive pair which in turn breaks the 1600 Hz SF signaling unit and causes either broken rings or no ring at all. In order to alleviate this situation the 1600 Hz SF signaling unit was adjusted for a 1550 Hz output. The feed back at 1550 Hz was too low to break the 1600 Hz SF signaling unit within the AN/MSQ-73 but would break the TA-182 at the distant terminal.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That the 1600 Hz SF signaling unit be modified such that when the ringer puts out a 1600 Hz ring, the signal card within the ringer terminates the four-wire receive pair on the line side of the ringer. This could prevent the 1600 Hz feed back from the distant end hybrid coil from reaching the 1600 Hz SF signaling unit detector card.

c. Training:

(1) Cross Training Program.

(a) OBSERVATION: The cross training program continues to be a useful tool to the commander of any unit. It allows maximum use of available manpower and provides training in depth.

(b) EVALUATION: In many cases, cross trained personnel are as adept at the new skill as their school trained counterparts. It must be remembered that the program is most effective when the individual being

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trained has a related MOS, prior experience and/or personal knowledge and desire for the new MOS.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That cross training programs be vigorously pursued in units at all levels of command to strengthen overall use of manpower committed to the communications support mission.

d. Intelligence:

(1) Claymore Mines:

(a) OBSERVATION: Claymore mines had been improperly positioned affording the enemy easy access rather than denying him approach. They were liable to be turned around and used against, rather than for, friendly forces.

(b) EVALUATION: Loss of friendly forces could have occurred if the situation were permitted to exist without modification.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That, when installed as a portion of a permanent defense, claymore mines be placed on the second of three aprons, thereby increasing the difficulty for the enemy to turn them around.

(2) Perimeter Lighting:

(a) OBSERVATION: Power distribution system for perimeter lighting should be installed underground.

(b) EVALUATION: Perimeter lighting is probably the most important aspect of any perimeter defense system. Properly employed lighting provides maximum observation for the guards and denies the enemy visual access to the compound. It must be remembered that whenever power distribution lines are overhead they are exposed to damage from small arms and mortar fire. If they are destroyed a vital link in the compound's defensive system is rendered useless.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That power cables for perimeter defensive lighting be buried.

e. Logistics:

(1) Equipment Excess to Mission Requirements:

(a) OBSERVATION: Equipment not required for the accomplishment of the mission overburdens the work load of maintenance personnel.

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(b) EVALUATION: Equipment classified non-mission essential increases the unit's maintenance problems. Repair parts stockage is depleted and the work load on organizational repair personnel is greatly increased.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That all equipment not required for the accomplishment of the mission be turned in.

(2) Locally Built Steam Tables:

(a) OBSERVATION: Metal shipping cases for bombs can be used to build steam tables. Half of the shipping case can be used.

(b) EVALUATION: The shipping case can be filled with water and heated by a field range fire unit.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That the top of the shipping case be used because it is smaller and holds less water, therefore allowing the water to heat faster.

(3) Consolidation of Maintenance Activities:

(a) OBSERVATION: Consolidation of maintenance activities of co-located units does not cause a highly efficient operation.

(b) EVALUATION: Consolidation of maintenance functions and facilities for co-located units has proved unsuccessful. Company commanders are divorced from maintenance responsibility for their equipment and junior officers fail to attain a sense of urgency in command maintenance management. Supervision of a consolidated operation, under a member of the battalion staff, precludes his attention to, and assistance towards, overall battalion requirements.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That consolidated maintenance functions be separated and placed directly under the control of individual unit commanders.

f. Organization:

(1) Mission Assignments without Personnel Augmentation:

(a) OBSERVATION: Now missions are often assigned without authorization for requisition or assignment of appropriate personnel to accomplish the mission.

(b) EVALUATION: Mission assignments outside the current capability of any organization should be accompanied by a DA augmentation for the

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of 43d Signal Battalion (SPT) for Period
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

necessary personnel to operate and maintain the equipment to accomplish the new mission.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That, while new missions are being planned and studied, an augmentation of personnel in appropriate grades, MOS's and numbers be planned and considered. The appropriate TOE could then be submitted for necessary modification.

g. Other.

(1) Safety Patrol.

(a) OBSERVATION: It was felt that added emphasis needed to be placed on driver safety and safe driving practices. The local military police though constantly pursuing their law enforcement duties cannot observe any one organization's vehicles as closely as desired.

(b) EVALUATION: Initiation of a Battalion Safety Patrol in the areas most heavily travelled by this organization's vehicles, utilizing an officer with the authority to stop and cite any operator driving unsafely, has been a deterrent to would-be violators. These personnel normally are more concerned about the possible disciplinary action resulting from a citation than they are about any accident resulting from an unsafe act.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That safety patrols be employed in known high incident areas, with appropriate disciplinary action following any citations issued by the patrol, to supplement the regularly assigned law enforcement personnel in their efforts to prevent traffic accidents.

6 Incl

1. Org chart 43d Sig Bn
2. Org chart Co A
3. Org chart Co C
4. Org chart 278th Sig Co
5. Org chart 586th Sig Co
6. Msg Lessons Learned Tot Offensive (c)

Leo F. Dubeau
LEO F. DUBEAU
LTC, SigC
Commanding

DISTRIBUTION

A PLUS

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- 1-CG, USASTRATCOM-PAC
- 3-CG, USARV, ATTN: AVHCC-DST
- 1-CG; 1st Sig Bde, ATTN: SOCVOP
- 15-CO, 21st Sig Gp

19
SCCVNG-OPT (12 May 68) 1st Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report of 43rd Signal Battalion (Spt) for Period Ending
30 April 1968 (RCS CSFOR-65) (RL)

DA, HEADQUARTERS, 21ST SIGNAL GROUP APO 96240 23 May 1968

THRU: Commanding General, 1st Signal Brigade, APO SF 96384
Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, APO SF 96307
Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, APO SF 96558

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the
Army, Washington, D.C. 20310

1. (U) Transmitted herewith is one copy of , Headquarters, 43rd Signal Battalion Report, subject as above.
2. (U) Concur in the commanders observations and recommendations with the following comments and/or exceptions.

a. Reference Section 1, para 1c (2):

(1) In analysis of requisition statistics indicate that the battalion is short the following personnel:

3 - 32D40
7 - 36H40
17 - 63A10
5 - 71B50
70 - 72C20

(2) A further examination of this data indicates that requisitions are being submitted only for known losses. Position vacancies do not appear to be included in the battalion's requisition. A letter has been sent to the battalion requesting a detail analysis be made of past records to determine the actual status of their requisitions. Future action will be dependent upon the findings of this study.

b. Reference Section 1, para 1c (5): Promotions to E7 are made at Group level based on allocations and Group wide vacancies. The Commanding General, 1st Signal Brigade, retains authority to promote to grades E8 and E9. Senior personnel TDY to Southeast Asia Signal School have been reassigned to HHD, 160th Signal Group as directed by a 1st Signal Brigade message on 5 May 68.

c. Reference Section 1, para 1h (1) and Section 2, para 2e (1): Equipment located with the 586th Signal Company at An Khe is being reported for disposition IAW 1st Signal Brigade Letter, SCCVLG-2, dated 29 Mar 68, subject: Turn In of TOE/MTOE Equipment Not Needed for Operational Requirements (RCS AVHGD-39)

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SCCVNG-OPT

23 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 43rd Signal Battalion (Spt) for Period Ending
30 April 1968 (RCS CSFOR-65) (R1) (U)

d. Reference Section 2, para 2b (2): A new card has been designed for posting on each stack of carrier equipment. This card requires the posting of all pertinent information on each channel to include input and output levels.

d. Reference Section 2, para 4b (5): This headquarters feels that use of the 1550 HZ output is an adequate solution to the stated ringing problem. This method has been used at other sites experiencing the same problem and has, in all cases, produced extremely stable operation. All circuits utilizing 1550 HZ ring frequency must be noted on the circuit record cards.

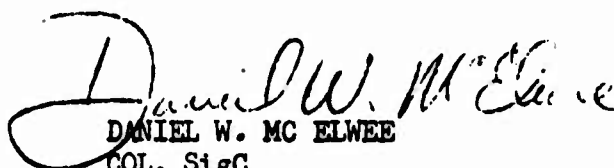
f. Reference Inclosure 6, para 4e: USARV, 1st Signal Brigade and this headquarters have procedures for resupply of units and isolated sites resulting from enemy activity. Six hour service is specified for emergency resupply and tactical emergency missions.

g. Reference Inclosure 6, para 4i: All units have been advised of weapons MWO's. The 21st Signal Group CMMI team inspects MWO application.

h. Reference Inclosure 6, para 4h and I: This headquarters has directed that all units operating isolated sites and engaged in their own site defense will arrange with local combat units for instruction on fire direction procedures. Further, classes are being given locally on proper operation and maintenance of crew-served weapons.

3. (U) This report is considered adequate.

4. (U) This indorsement is regraded unclassified when separated from classified inclosure 6.


DANIEL W. MC ELWEE
COL, SigC
Commanding

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SCCPV-OP-CR (12 May 68) 2d Ind (C)

**SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters, 43rd Signal Battalion (SPT)
for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)**

DA, HQ, 1st Signal Brigade (USASTRATCOM), APO SF 96384 15 JUN 1968

**TO: Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVHGC-DST,
APO SF 96375**

**1. (U) Subject report is forwarded in compliance with USARV Regulation
525-15.**

**2. (U) Concur in the Commander's observations, evaluations, and recom-
mendations as indorsed with the following comments:**

**a. Item: Personnel Shortage, 1c(1) and 1c(2), p.2, with para 2a,
1st Ind. A review of the authorized, required, and assigned strength
for the Brigade in these MOS's show an acute shortage in all except MOS
36H40.**

**b. Item: Polarization of Antenna Horn AT-903/G, 2b(4), p.11. This
should be done only if personnel are inexperienced and specialists are not
available to properly supervise such installations.**

**c. Item: Perimeter Lighting, 2d(2), p.13. This is an excellent idea
if the cables are buried in the initial installation. It is extremely
doubtful that projects or work orders to bury adequate existing cable
would be approved.**

**d. Item: Mission Assignments without Personnel Augmentation, 2f(1),
p.14. As new missions and communications requirements are developed,
plans are made to provide personnel with the proper training to perform
this new mission. These plans cannot always be carried out due to the
slow response of the authorization document system and the inflexible man-
power ceiling imposed on the 1st Signal Brigade.**

**3. (U) Non-concur in the Commander's recommendations listed below with
the following comments:**

**a. Item: Undesirable Promotion Situation, 1c(5), p.3, with para 2b,
1st Indorsement. The assignment of senior grade enlisted personnel is
made against requisitions submitted by the battalion, therefore this pro-
blem can be alleviated by proper requisitioning procedures at battalion
level. If an overstrength in MOS's and grades does exist, it is the res-
ponsibility of the commander to report these personnel as excess to his
requirements so that they may be effectively utilized in positions comm-
ensurate with their grade and MOS. This headquarters has not been made
aware of any significant overstrength of senior grade personnel in the
43d Signal Battalion.**

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SOCPV-OP-CR (12 May 68) 2d Ind (C)

15 JUN 1968

**SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters, 43rd Signal Battalion (SPT)
for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)**

b. Item: Installation of C/C Black Circuit Patch Bay, 2b(3), p.11. The Relay Panels SB-1529 presently installed in the COMCEN provide this capability. Jacks are provided which permit measurement of current and distortion and observation of wave shape on both sides of the relays, on send and receive circuits. Representatives from this headquarters will visit the Pleiku AOC and instruct personnel in the capabilities and use of the installed equipment.

c. Item: 160MHz Signaling Adjustment in the Operation of the Technical Control Facility AN/MSQ-73, 2b(5), p.12, with para 2d, 1st Indorsement. This headquarters does not concur in the recommendation as the solution. A detailed study on this subject is being sent out in a letter from this headquarters.

4. (C) Concur in the Commander's observations and recommendations in Inclosure 6, subject: Lessons Learned Tet Offensive, as indorsed, with the following comments and/or exceptions:

a. Item: Concealment of Observation Tower Access, Incl 6, 4A, p.2. This has already been incorporated as 1st Signal Brigade policy.

b. Item: Placement of Claymore Mines, Incl 6, 4B, p.3. This headquarters does not concur in the recommendation as stated due to the fact that erection of back blast walls would reveal the location of the mines, thereby allowing the enemy to plot the entire claymore defensive perimeter.

c. Item: Cable Distribution, Incl 6, 4D, p.4. Every effort is being made at present to bury cable wherever feasible.

d. Item: Fire Direction and Distance Estimation Incl 6, 4H, p.8 with para 2h, 1st Indorsement. It should be noted that this training is required to be included in Combat Indoctrination as prescribed by 1st Signal Brigade Regulation 350-3, Annex B to Annex III, Paragraph 2M.

e. Item: Crew Served Weapons Classes, Incl 6, 4J, p.9, with para 2h, 1st Indorsement. It should be also noted that this training is required to be included in NCO Leadership and Management Training as prescribed by 1st Signal Brigade Regulation 350-3, Appendix V, paragraph 4a(7).

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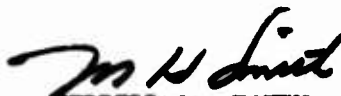
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SOCFV-OP-CR (12 May 68) 2d Ind (C)

15 JUN 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters, 43rd Signal Battalion (SPT)
for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

FOR THE COMMANDER:



MERRILL H. SMITH

LTC, GS

Acting Chief of Staff

Copy furnished:

Commanding General, United States Army Strategic Communications Command,
ATTN: SSOOP, Fort Huachuca, Arizona, 85613.

AVHGC-DST (12 May 68) 3d Ind (U) CPT Arnold/hga/IBN 4485
SUBJECT: Operational Report of 43d Signal Battalion (SPT) for Period
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96375 18 JUN 1968

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-DT,
APO 96558

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the quarterly period ending 30 April 1968 from Headquarters, 43d Signal Battalion (Support).

2. Concur with report as submitted.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

C. S. Nakatsukasa
C. S. NAKATSUKASA
Captain, AGC
Assistant Adjutant General

Copy furnished:
HQ, 1st Sig Bde (USASTRATCOM)
HQ, 43d Sig Bn (Spt)

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GPOF-BT (12 May 68) 4th Ind (U)
SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 43d Sig Bn (Spt) for Period Ending
30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 1 JUL 1968

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the
Army, Washington, D. C. 20310

This headquarters has evaluated subject report and forwarding indorse-
ments and concurs in the report as indorsed.

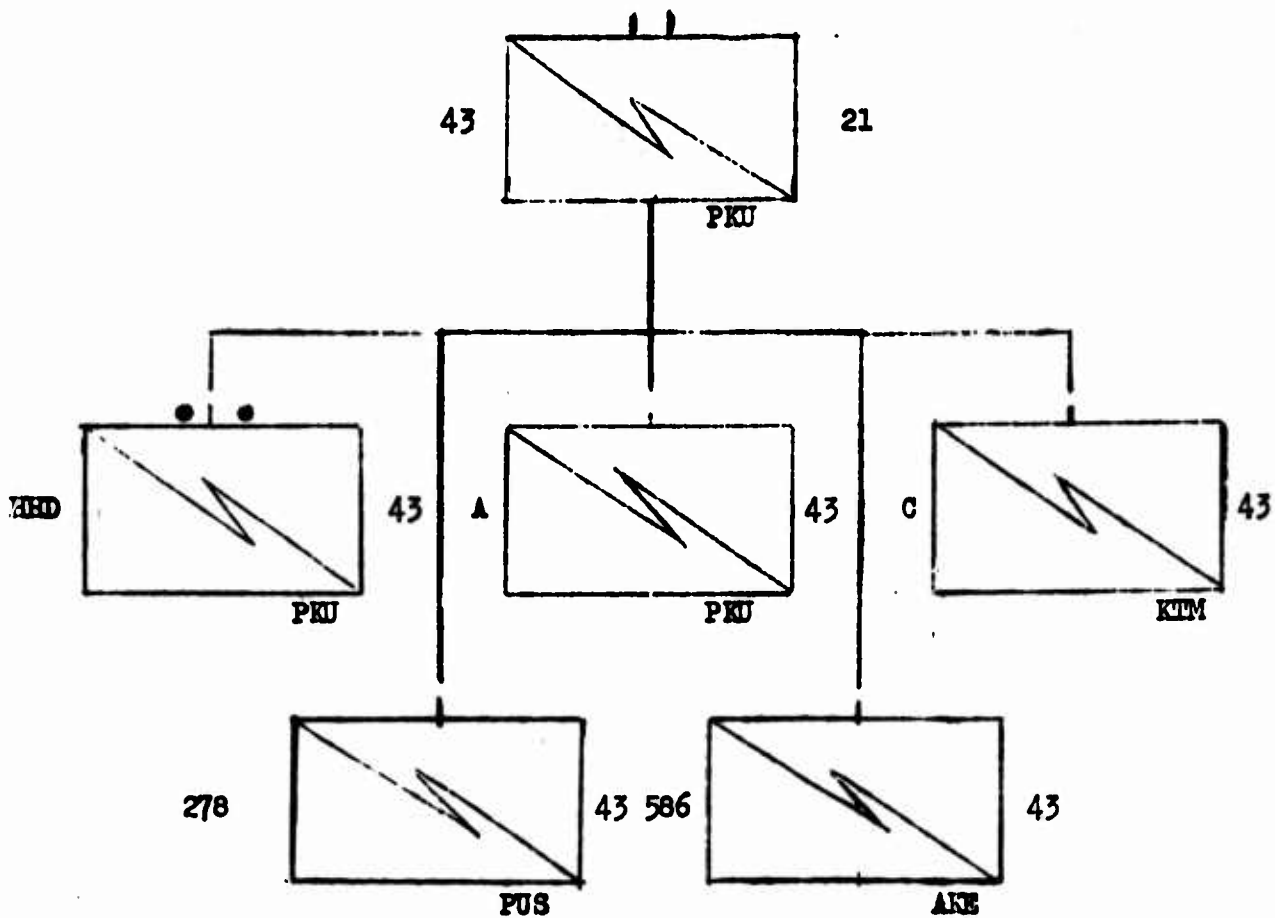
FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:


C.L. SHORTT
CPT, AGC
Asst AG

43D SIGNAL BATTALION (SUPPORT)

ORGANIZATION

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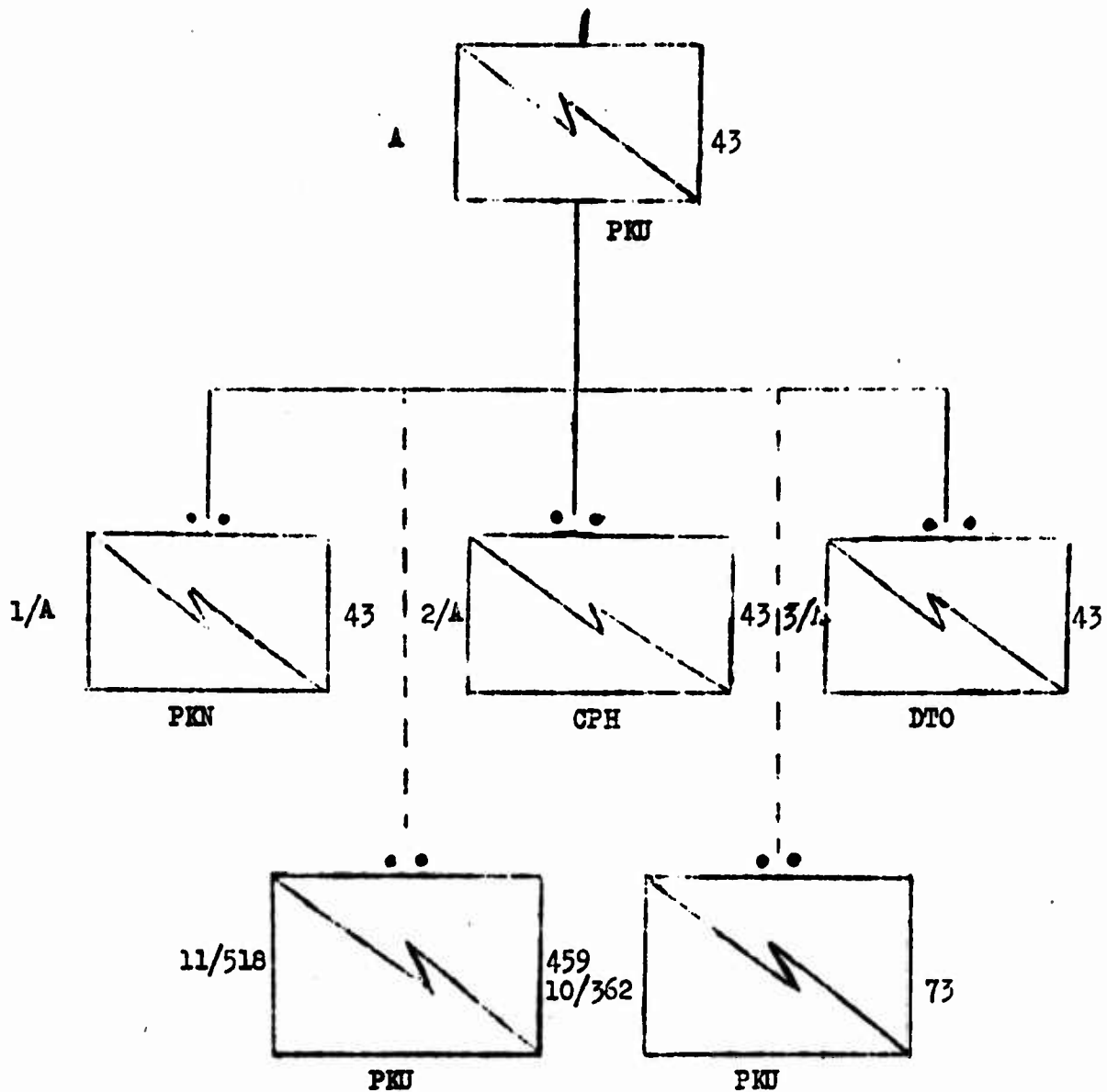
Inclosure 1

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COMPANY A, 43D SIGNAL BATTALION (SUPPORT)

ORGANIZATION



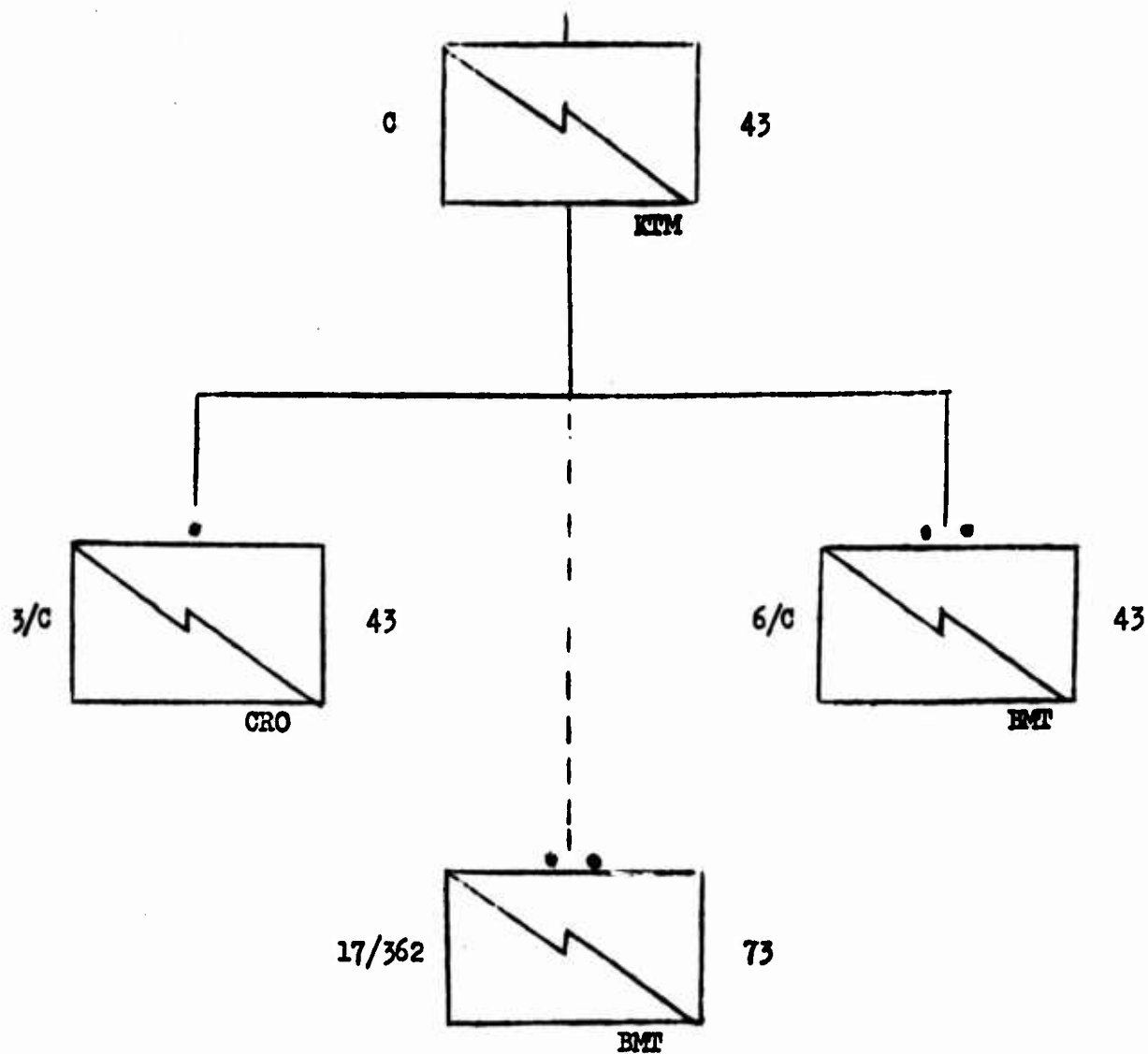
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COMPANY C, 43D SIGNAL BATTALION (SUPPORT)

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ORGANIZATION



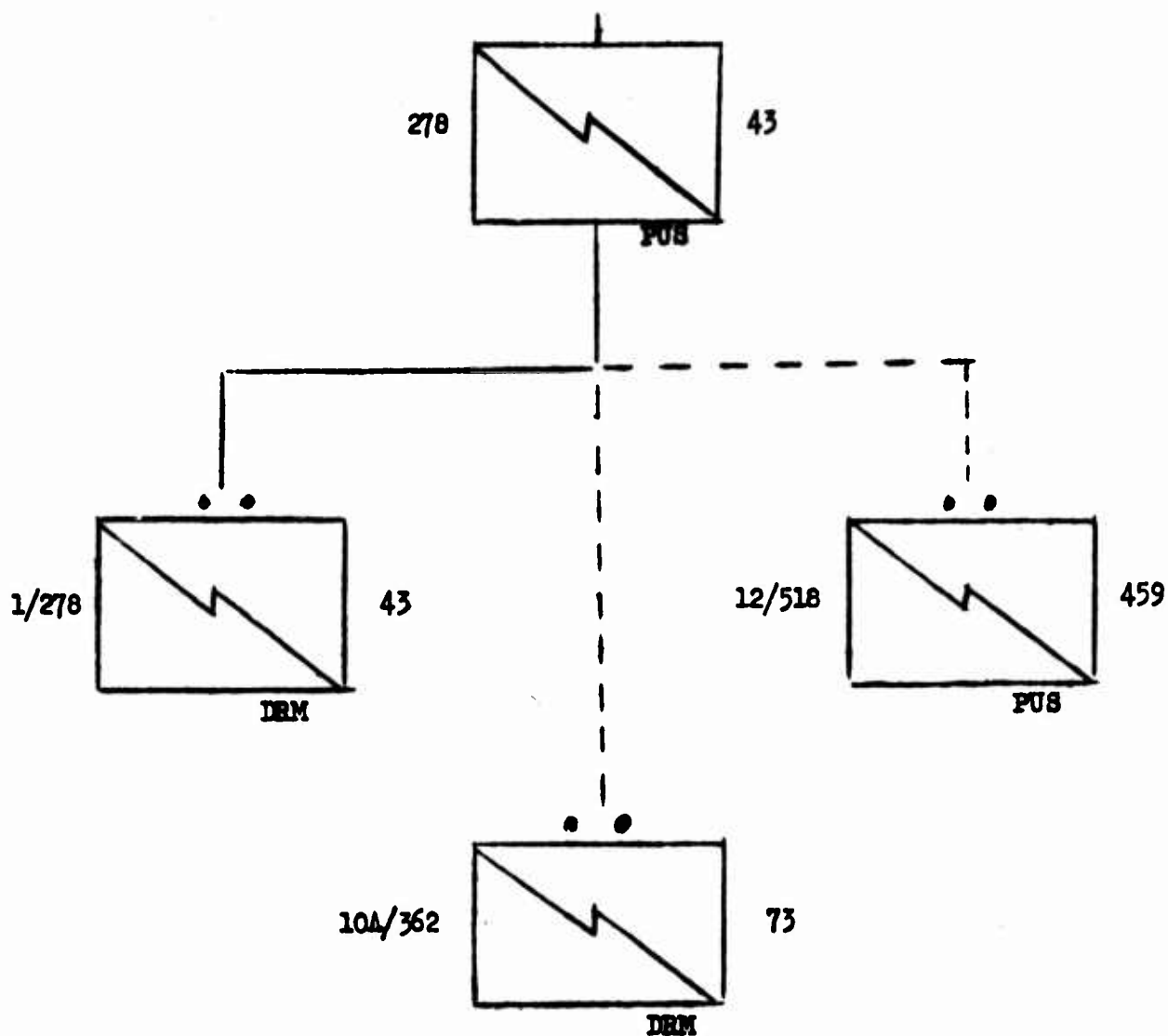
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Inclosure 3

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278TH SIGNAL COMPANY, 43D SIGNAL BATTALION (SUPPORT)

ORGANIZATION



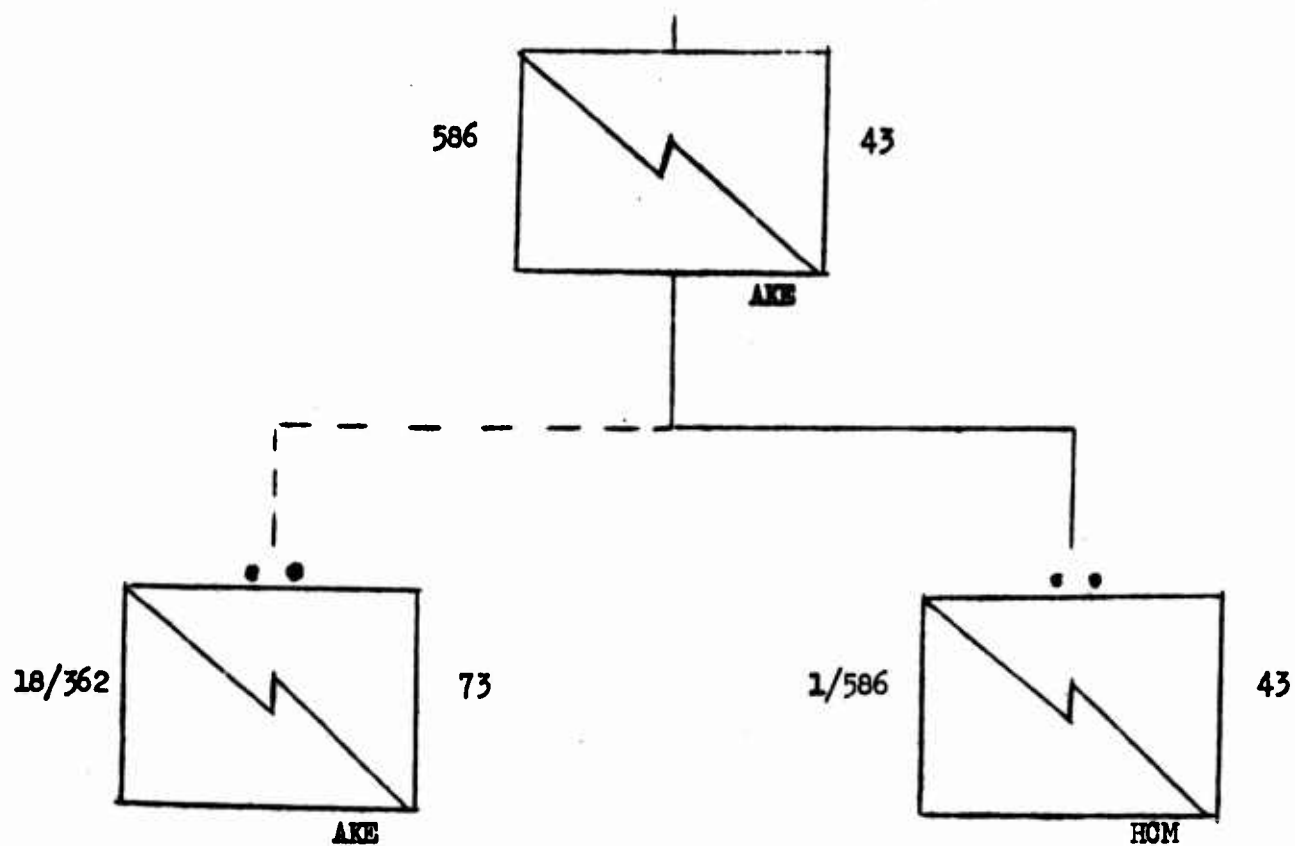
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Inoclosure 4

586TH SIGNAL COMPANY, 43D SIGNAL BATTALION (SUPPORT)

ORGANIZATION

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Inclosure 5

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OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE

CO 43d Sig Bn PKU RVN

CO 21st Sig Gp NHA RVN

C O N F I D E N T I A L Cite SCCVNG-PKG 844945 Feb 68.

For S-3

Subject: Lessons Learned - Tet Offensive (U)

Part I: Points of Security and Operation During the Tet
Offensive (U)

1.(U) Planning and preparation for this offensive is
covered in Part II.

2.(C) The planning and preparation greatly affected the
command readiness posture of this organization. The Pleiku
area, with the exception of an occasional mortar or rocket
attack, had been relatively quiet for several months. As
a result the general alertness of the entire area had begun
to relax slightly. Three rocket attacks in the battalion
area and warning of an impending VC/NVA full-scale offen-
sive jarred everyone out of this relaxed attitude. As a
result, all units in the area were prepared for the even-

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LAWRENCE RANSBERGER
CPT SigC
Operations Officer

DARELL A. HOTT
1LT, AGC, Adjutant

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Incl 6

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tual attack. Details of the preparation are covered in Part II, para 1 and 2.

3. (U) During the actual offensive several lessons were learned. These are enumerated in the following paragraph.

4.(C) Lessons Learned:

A. ITEM: Concealment of Observation Tower Access.

DISCUSSION: During recent action in Kontum this organization had one man wounded while climbing down the ladder from the observation platform. It has been deduced that an enemy sniper saw him disappear from the upper level and set his sights for the open space between the observation level and the lower bunker. The sniper was thus prepared to fire when the individual appeared in this area. Had the stairway been inclosed and the movement concealed only an extremely "lucky" shot would result in an injury. This concealment need not be elaborate. The object is to conceal movement rather than provide cover from penetration by enemy small arms rounds.

LESSONS LEARNED: If access steps on ladders were inclosed, movement to and from the observation platform would be concealed from enemy observation. This would result in fewer killed and wounded personnel as only a "lucky" shot would catch

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an individual between the two levels.

RECOMMENDATION: That all observation level access ladders and steps be inclosed with solid wall wooden housings.

B. ITEM: Placement of Claymore Mines

DISCUSSION: It is imperative that claymore mines be located within the barbed wire barracades that form the perimeter to prevent tampering by enemy personnel. Special provisions must be made for a back-up barbed wire obstacle behind the claymore mine as it will cut the front apron when detonated.

LESSON LEARNED: When claymore mines are utilized as a part of the perimeter of defense a back-up barracade must be constructed behind the mine to prevent breaching of the perimeter when the mine is detonated.

RECOMMENDATION: That a back-up barracade be utilized with all claymore mine installations.

C. ITEM: Bunker Communications

DISCUSSION: During recent enemy activity frequent outages occurred in bunker communications due to cut cable and wire. Installation of bunker communications underground would have prevented virtually all of these outages. By burying cable and wire a minimum of three feet it would be protected from all but a

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direct hit by a 122mm or 140 mm rocket. Due to the relatively short distances involved, line loss on buried WD-1 wire would not be appreciable. Even with this added protection an alternate line should be installed following a route completely separate from the main line.

LESSON LEARNED: Bunker communication, unless installed underground, is highly vulnerable to enemy activity.

RECOMMENDATION: That all bunker communications utilize underground cable and wire distribution.

D. Cable Distribution

DISCUSSION: During the Tet Offensive the signal sites at Kontum and Ban Me Thout lost approximately 90 per cent of all local distribution to local hot lines, sole-user circuits and switchboard subscriber drops. All distribution in these areas is overhead. Ordnance, both enemy and friendly, and fires and movement of heavy equipment such as tanks and APC's virtually eliminated all local communications in those areas with exception of radio.

LESSON LEARNED: Overhead local communication distribution is unsatisfactory and unreliable in a highly unstable combat zone such as RVN. No area is exempt from rocket and mortar

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attack to which overhead distribution is highly vulnerable.

RECOMMENDATION: That all telephone cable distribution systems be planned for underground installation in future projects and, where feasible, existing overhead plants be buried.

E. ITEM: Resupply of Isolated Sites

DISCUSSION: Late in the hostilities at Kontum it became necessary for this organization to resupply Company C, 43d Signal Battalion, with ammunition. While attempting to do this from Pleiku, it was discovered that no one, to include MACV, had any plans or provisions for resupply of the Kontum area. A lengthy delay was encountered while the battalion headquarters attempted to secure aviation support to fly ammunition to Kontum. Since there was no centralized plan or control for resupply of Kontum each unit in the area was left to fend for itself. For an organization lacking any organic aviation support this becomes an extremely critical problem. A helicopter was finally received from 21st Signal Group and was able to make one flight to Kontum.

LESSON LEARNED: Contingency plans for supply of isolated sites do not exist. Signal support detachments are highly dependent on the organizations which they support for coordination of

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resupply activities. It is imperative that the headquarters with overall control at the area being attacked oversee resupply operations so that transportation will not be wasted on non-essential items. The only staff capable of doing this is the one with the overall view of action in the contested area. This cannot be left to an individual that has knowledge of only a small part of the entire operation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1) That plans for resupply of isolated sites by the units they are supporting be reviewed and/or established. This should be controlled by the headquarters with overall area defense coordination and control.

(2) That this organization be supplied the aircraft and aviators authorized by present MTOE. The expected continuation of greatly increased enemy activity within II Corps and recent acquisition of communications responsibility for the An Khe area has made the aviation section a vital necessity for adequate supply of signal items for 43d Signal Battalion units.

F. ITEM: Unprotected Communication Equipment

DISCUSSION: This organization had two VHF system outages due to damage of coaxial cable at Kontum. Regardless of how

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well protected the rest of the communications equipment may be, items such as coaxial cable, waveguide, and antennas cannot feasibly be protected. At Kontum the enemy made extensive use of air-burst mortar rounds. The shrapnel from this type of ordnance can cause heavy damage to the antenna and associated equipment.

LESSON LEARNED: Spare antenna equipment is a necessity to prevent extended outages during sustained enemy activities.

RECOMMENDATION: That all signal sites have on-site back-up capability in items such as antennas, coaxial cable and wave guide. Exact amounts of back-up would have to be determined by individual site survey.

G. ITEM: Ammunition in Bunkers

DISCUSSION: A great deal of difficulty was encountered in resupplying fighting bunkers with ammunition from a central storage point. During periods of extremely heavy rocket and mortar attacks it is not safe to cross open areas for resupply of ammunition.

LESSON LEARNED: Fighting bunkers should be stocked with as much basic load as possible.

RECOMMENDATION: That all bunkers contain the following

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quantities of ammunition: 1200 rds per M-60; 25 rds per M-79; 500 rds ball per weapon. Ammo should remain in the can and the cardboard box left intact until actual use. Leaving the ammunition in the boxes is extremely important as this organization had several failures due to dirty ammo from unnecessary handling.

H. ITEM: Fire Direction and Distance Estimation

DISCUSSION: During an attack it is frequently necessary for non-artillery oriented personnel to direct and shift artillery and mortar fire. It took approximately three days of continuous action before personnel of this organization were fully capable of directing and controlling artillery and mortar fire. Answers such as "It's quite a ways out" and "A little to the left" are not much use to fire direction control.

LESSON LEARNED: Signal troops in general are totally unfamiliar with fire direction and lack of experience and training in estimating distance and angular measurements.

RECOMMENDATION: That at least a portion if not all of a unit receive training on estimating distances and angular measure and especially in directing and correcting friendly fires.

I. ITEM: M-60 Machine Gun

DISCUSSION: At least six malfunctions of the M-60

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machine gun during recent attacks have been attributed to lack of application of the MWO on the gas cylinder plug. The MWO requires drilling and wiring to prevent loosening due to vibration.

LESSON LEARNED: During periods of heavy firing the gas cylinder plug on the M-60 machine gun must be frequently checked to insure that it has not loosened from vibration.

RECOMMENDATION: That all M-60 machine immediately have MWO 9-1000-232-30/1 applied.

j. ITEM: Crew-Served Weapons Classes

DISCUSSION: During the recent Tet Offensive it became evident that despite previous training some personnel lacked considerable knowledge in the operation of crew-served weapons. Also there was on hand several weapons presently considered obsolete but still fully operational that only a very few personnel were familiar with. During the lulls in the attack training was conducted by the most qualified personnel on both TO&E crew-served weapons and also the older weapons. This particularly was true at Ban Me Thout where a BAR was on hand. During attacks such as were sustained during the past few days the desire to learn and the attentiveness of the student greatly increased. Any

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increase in proficiency is well worth the time and effort extended especially when it adds to your defensive capability another weapon such as the BAR.

LESSON LEARNED: That regardless of mission, enemy activity and available time, training is a vital necessity for survival.

RECOMMENDATION: That much more attention be given the training of weapons crews. It is not sufficient that they know how to load and fire; they must know how to properly utilize the weapon. Items such as knowledge of the effect of different types of fire patterns are of vital importance to all personnel of the unit.

PART II. Conduct of Operation During the Tet Offensive (U)

2.(C) On 24 January 1968 this organization received notification of an expected large offensive by VC/NVA forces prior to the Tet Cease-Fire. At that time the following actions were taken:

- a. Command bunkers were manned 24 hours per day by personnel from the S-3 section.
- b. The perimeter guard was tripled and a 20 man reactionary force established and kept on standby during the hours of darkness.

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c. All bunkers communications were constantly checked and kept in 100 per cent operation.

d. Bunkers assignments were reviewed and additional training given to all personnel.

e. Ammunition was checked and serviced and as much additional ammo as possible procured.

f. Several sites constructed additional bunker facilities and all sites repaired present bunkers.

2.(C) The expected increase in activity was anticipated to take place prior to the Tet Cease-Fire. As a result, on the morning of 30 January 1968, although still on full yellow alert, the attitude was beginning to relax as the ceasefire was in effect. The prior warning of the actual attack was the attack itself. Attacks on Kontum, Ban Me Thout, Dak To and Pleiku all began at approximately 0200 hours 30 January 1968.

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42

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5. AUTHOR(S) (First name, middle initial, last name) CO, 43d Signal Battalion (Support)			
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